

SOCIETY TO SAVE ROCKS

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ROCK CONSERVATION

Photos by Sangeeta Varma



A commendable example of going the extra mile to save our 2.5 billion year old rocks in the premises of Rock Levelz- an apartment complex right in the heart of our city.



ROCK LEVELZ

Fancy a slumbering sheet rock some 180 ft long forming the very foundation of your home. Added to this imagine your residence being centrally located, vastu friendly, overlooking an urban valley, with an independent house feel – in other words, the dream habitat for all rock enthusiasts !

Rock Levelz located off Road 12 Banjara Hills is probably one of the few apartment complexes that saved a huge Deccan sheet rock for the sheer love of rocks. Several builders had given up on this rock strewn plot as not being commercially viable, but it was precisely these rocks that threw Chartered Accountant turned Builder Shyam Sundar Bansal the challenge.

Being an ardent Nature lover he was determined to save the rocks, build a luxury apartment and make a success of the venture. In Architect Lava Ram Devineni of O2 Square, Bansal finally found someone who could appreciate the rocks as much as him and willing to work around them – the so called obstacles that certainly put his expertise to test !



Patience and passion to integrate a million year old rock into a modern day structure and make it aesthetically attractive yet practical is what kept Lava Ram going through 48 months of the Rock Levelz project. He confides, "There were moments of doubt as to stability of the rock, doubts of it sliding and the prime challenge of keeping the 40 ft slope of the rock in mind through out the design. But the grit of Bansal and wife Amita to build around the rock bed was so strong that soon things began to fall into place. Perhaps one of the most challenging projects but also among the most satisfying."

Rock Levelz has managed to create the ambience of a cosy resort with the comfort of openness through its clever design. For those struggling under pressures of space and practicality while developing their property yet keen to conserve rocks, Rock Levelz sure can be a great eye opener.

Padmini B Patell

S2SR NEIGHBORHOOD COMMITTEES

The art and act of preserving and protecting Rock Formations and Ecosystems has become harder by the day with rampant illegal destruction activities. A disconnect is observed between the groups where awareness is being spread and areas where preservation and protection are issues for immediate action with close monitoring and continuous follow up. For this to be realized the Society has embarked on building and supporting Neighborhood Committees which focus on areas they reside in.

The idea became a reality when Mrs Anuradha of Peerancheruvu Neighborhood took active interest in Peerancheruvu rock formations of Snehitha Hills, a resident of PBEL city which is close by. After the initial active steps taken by Dr. Madhusudhan, Diyanath and Anuradha, to stop the blasting at Peerancheruvu Heritage Rocks Site, the need to continuously monitor the site became clear in active discussions between Dr. Madhusudhan and Dr. Sudheer Bhan.

Photo : Badri Nichinametta



Peerancheruvu Neighborhood Committee

On 4th June the first Neighborhood Committee of the Society was initiated at Peerancheruvu with Anuradha, Shailender and Maria Prem. The Neighborhood Committees will take along with them all the citizens of the neighborhood interested in protection of the Ecosystems including lakes with their feeder channels specially from Rocks, native flora and fauna associated and hygiene of the area. Periodic awareness sessions will be organised to keep the Neighborhood updated about the need and ways of protecting the environment.

Peerancheruvu Neighborhood Committee has successfully stalled the destruction going on at the Heritage Site. It also is maintaining continuous vigil including night walks and lake walks which have been a huge hit in the area, kindling lot of enthusiasm and eagerness to protect their Ecosystem. At present, the Peerancheruvu Neighborhood Committee has 30 active members and is growing in strength.

The success of Peerancheruvu has also reset the focus on Rayadurgam Navkhalsa Heritage site which is being actively monitored Dr. Murali and Secunderabad Cantonment by Dr. Rita who has taken the initiative to involve builders like Ganesh, families of the Defence & Railway personnel and youth including FOS society members. Keep a lookout for news from Neighborhood Committees.

Dr. K. Madhusudhan

KBR NATIONAL PARK - FATE OF TREES & ROCKS

On the one side:

"Hyderabad Rising", a group of Hyderabad citizens formed to protest the intention to fell a host of trees in the KBR Walkway (an upto 30 m wide garden all around the park, open to the public) and in the park itself to facilitate the construction of an elevated road system around the park.

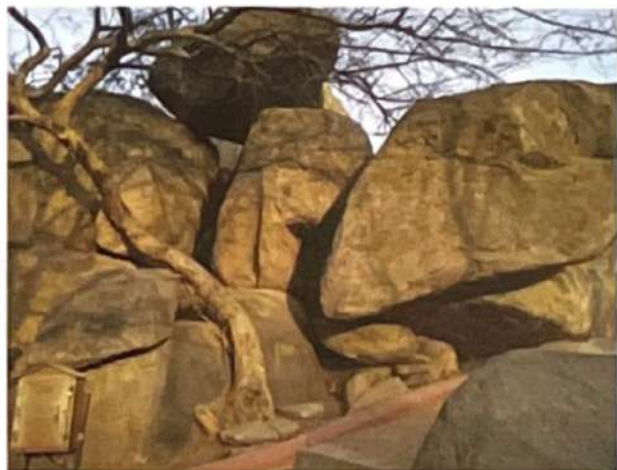
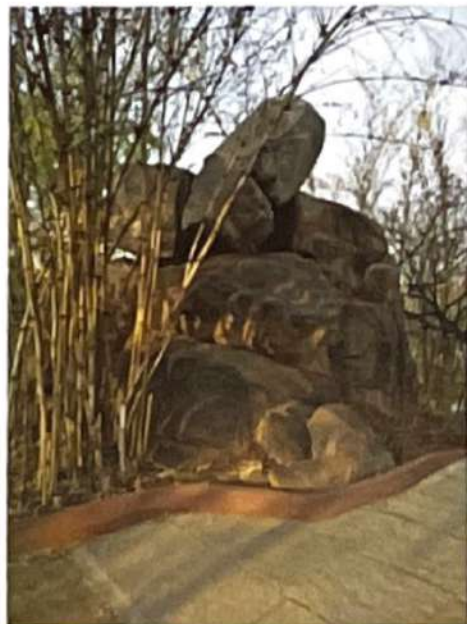
On the other:

the Government of Telangana who maintain that management of the chaotic traffic between Banjara Hills and Hitec City cannot be effective without this new road system, called SRDP (Strategic Road Development Plan), and that many saplings will be planted.

And what will happen to the rocks – those impressive clusters that dot the Walkway at the Road No. 45 junction in Jubilee Hills and other places too? 2,500 million years old, they shelter trees and shrubs huddled around them. Sitting high above the road that encircles the park, their presence is the pleasure of hundreds of daily Walkers as well as the road users. Do we do away with the natural heritage of our city, the amazing ancient granite formations and bury them under our greedy need for

development? Can we build a flyover (if there has to be a flyover) that goes over the rocks instead of destroying the rocks?

"Hyderabad Rising" says that the small eco-sensitive zone (the Walkway) that runs around the park must under no circumstances be touched. This is to include the rocks, because they will never grow back. Will the government/developers listen?



Photos: Sangeeta Varma

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